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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Agenda item 88
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE
QUESTION OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS
IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 20 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government acting as the Presidency of the Western European Union, I have the honour to submit a copy of sections I and IV of the Erfurt Declaration adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Western European Union at its meeting at Erfurt, Germany, on 17 and 18 November 1997.

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating the text of the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 88, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tono EITEL

ANNEX

Erfurt Declaration adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Western European Union at its meeting at Erfurt, Germany, on 18 November 1997

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Western European Union (WEU) nations met at Erfurt on 18 November 1997. The WEU Council of Ministers was preceded by a meeting of the Defence Ministers of the 13 countries in the framework of the Western European Armaments Group (WEAG).

2. The meeting of the WEU Ministerial Council was held for the first time in a city beyond the line which separated the peoples of Europe for more than 40 years. Ministers seized the occasion to reaffirm their commitment to creating a common European security space, one free of dividing lines, and in which all States are partners in security.

3. In the past months, the European Council in Amsterdam and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit in Madrid have taken major steps in shaping the new European security architecture.

- The decision taken at Amsterdam to develop further the security and defence dimension of the European Union (EU) has special relevance for WEU, in establishing a qualitatively enhanced relationship in particular through the competence of the European Council to establish guidelines which shall obtain in respect of WEU in matters for which the Union avails itself of WEU and in incorporating the Petersberg tasks into the Treaty on European Union while relying on WEU for their preparation and implementation.

- The Madrid Summit was an important milestone with regard to the internal and external adaptation process of NATO. WEU has been actively contributing since Berlin to the development of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO, permitting, inter alia, the creation of militarily coherent and effective forces capable of operating under the political control and strategic direction of WEU.

4. In the light of these decisions, Ministers reaffirmed the importance of continuing to develop a genuine ESDI and of assuming greater European responsibility for security and defence matters. The institutional relationship between the European Union and WEU as established in the Treaty on European Union and reinforced in the Treaty of Amsterdam and the strengthening of institutional cooperation between WEU and NATO permit a comprehensive European approach to crisis management. The Amsterdam Treaty, with the incorporation of the Petersberg tasks, has confirmed that EU's range of responses, which includes the economic, political, diplomatic and humanitarian, is complemented by access to WEU's politico-military crisis management capability. This capability includes the possibility of having recourse to the assets and capabilities of

the Atlantic Alliance, including its European command arrangements. The enhancement of WEU's pivotal role between the EU and NATO remains therefore a high priority on WEU's agenda.

5. Ministers furthermore agreed on the following priorities for WEU's future work:

- They stressed that the reinforcement of the institutional links between EU and WEU agreed at Amsterdam calls for enhanced practical cooperation between the two organizations.

- Between NATO's Ministerial Council in Berlin and the Madrid Summit, major policy issues concerning the development of ESDI within NATO have been resolved. Work is continuing on a number of important, practical measures. Ministers expressed their conviction that new forms of cooperation between WEU and NATO need to be developed, allowing the political directives formulated by the respective Ministerial Councils to be more effectively translated into practical links between both Organizations. Ministers tasked the Permanent Council to take this matter up with NATO with a view to consulting on and coordinating all ESDI-related work of both Organizations at the earliest possible stage, including through greater use of joint working groups and through the possibility of setting up ad hoc expert working groups on specific topics.

- Ministers shared the view that WEU's pivotal role between EU and NATO requires it to improve its consultation and information exchange with both organizations. They directed the Permanent Council to keep under review work to this end, bearing in mind in particular the importance of WEU consultation with EU and NATO in future contingencies.

- Furthermore, Ministers considered that the moment has now come to reflect on procedures within WEU, facilitating consensus-building and, where appropriate, the emergence of a decision to act in response to a specific crisis, within the framework of the relevant provisions of the modified Brussels Treaty. They tasked the Permanent Council to take this matter up with priority and report its conclusions to their next meeting, taking into account the discussions in the Permanent Council following the French proposal on constructive abstention.

6. WEU is also ready to support the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in their crisis management tasks.

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IV. WEU'S CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN ALBANIA

21. Ministers had an extensive exchange of views on the present situation in Albania. They welcomed the willingness of the new Government of Albania to pursue the process of democratic normalization and its readiness to cooperate closely with the international community. They called upon all political forces

of Albania to contribute actively to the process of national reconciliation, which is a prerequisite for sustained stabilization of the country.

22. They welcomed the ongoing efforts of the international community to assist Albania and took note with satisfaction of the results of the Rome Ministerial Conference on 17 October. They expressed particular appreciation for the important contributions of EU, which provides significant assistance and advice for Albanian reconstruction, and of OSCE, which continues to provide a flexible coordinating framework for international support. They welcomed the successful conclusion of the mission of the Multinational Protection Force and paid tribute to the nations participating in it and in particular to Italy for its role in leading this Force, as well as to effective initiatives undertaken for the stabilization of Albania. They welcomed the decision of NATO to assist in the reconstruction of the army.

23. Ministers welcomed the results achieved so far by WEU's Multinational Advisory Police Element (MAPE) in Albania. They noted with satisfaction that MAPE's short-term programme provided training and advice to key Albanian police officers in the areas of public order, border policing and in the framework of the Police Academy. They reiterated their willingness to maintain WEU's involvement in Albania and welcomed the increased participation by WEU countries as part of the extension of MAPE's mandate until 12 April 1998. The option of a further extension of the mandate thereafter will be considered in the light of results. They welcomed the implementation of a long-term programme offering basic training, specialized training, evaluation, advice and logistic support to the Albanian police.

24. Ministers welcomed the readiness of WEU nations to contribute personnel to the mission and noted with satisfaction that Associate Members, Observers and Associate Partners have been taking part in the mission from the beginning. They expressed their appreciation for the work accomplished by the MAPE personnel and confirmed the need to provide MAPE personnel with the adequate equipment.

25. Ministers welcomed the readiness of the European Union to support the long-term programme of MAPE in Albania. Coordination and cooperation between the advisory and training activities of WEU and complementary activities in support of the Albanian police funded by the European Union's Action Plan for Coordinated Aid to Poland and Hungary (PHARE) is being considered as a key element for the success of the long-term programme. The cooperation of PHARE experts with the MAPE team is one important step in ensuring close coordination of WEU and EU activities in Albania.

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Agenda item 36

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Letter dated 24 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In the context of the General Assembly's consideration of agenda item 36 on the question of Palestine, I have the honour to make the following statement:

The State of Israel was created on 14 May 1948, the day on which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland withdrew its forces and terminated its mandate. The international community is still awaiting the creation of an Arab State, good neighbourly and friendly towards the State of Israel, in conformity with the Partition Plan approved by the General Assembly on 29 November 1947. The creation of such a State would put an end to the tragic Arab-Israeli conflict which for over four decades has inflicted untold suffering on the peoples of the Middle East region. It is in this spirit that my delegation wishes to take part in, and make a positive contribution to, the present debate.

After the signing of the Declaration of Principles in Washington in 1993, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization consistently demonstrated their courage and did their utmost to promote the peace process and allow it to move ahead. The international community welcomed the positive direction taken by the overall situation in the Middle East, seeing it as a crucial stage on the road to the attainment of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish an independent Palestinian State. To our very great regret, in the past two years the situation in the region has deteriorated dramatically as a result of the building of new settlements at Har Homa Jabal Abu Ghneim in East Jerusalem. The parties concerned have lost all confidence in each other and a feeling of widespread frustration prevails. We have all been witnesses to the acts of violence, killings and even armed clashes that have gravely imperilled the peace process approved and so strongly supported by the international community. My delegation considers

it essential that the parties concerned should urgently restore a climate of mutual confidence and pursue their negotiations in good faith in order to expedite the achievement of an overall settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, as well as other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Only such a salutary approach can save the peace process from the danger that currently threatens it.

As you know, the question of Palestine is not a new one. It is the subject of a difficult debate that has been going on for almost five decades. In this new era of dialogue and international cooperation, the world cannot allow this conflict to go on indefinitely. The two parties concerned, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, should be helped to settle their dispute without further delay, thereby contributing to the restoration of peace, security and cooperation in this global trouble spot.

Of course, the road to peace is not an easy one. Several obstacles still remain. The two parties should do everything in their power to prevent the peace process from being derailed. We believe that this process, which is supported by the entire international community, has every chance of success. The cause of peace is a just one. It represents the hope and the profound aspiration of the peoples of the region to live together in harmony and mutual understanding.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 36.

(Signed) Alounkéo KITTIKHOUN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Agenda item 36

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Letter dated 1 December 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of the Republic of Namibia wishes to become a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

By becoming a full member of the Committee, the Government of the Republic of Namibia reaffirms its unwavering solidarity and support to the people of Palestine in their just struggle for genuine freedom and self-determination.

(Signed) Martin ANDJABA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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